

Indiana National Bank Building  
3 Virginia Avenue  
Indianapolis  
Marion County  
Indiana

HABS No. IND-62

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-62

INDIANA NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

Location: 3 Virginia Avenue, at the southern acute-angle intersection of Virginia Avenue and South Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

Present Owner: Jefferson National Life Insurance Company

Present Occupant and Use: The building was demolished in 1970.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1 Feb. 1896 - 12 Jan. 1897.  
Additions were made in the following years:  
1912, 1935, 1950, and 1958.
2. Architect: D. A. Bohlen & Son. (Oscar D. Bohlen and Hugo A. Zigrosser were the men in the firm involved with the original building.) The same firm also designed all subsequent additions and alterations to the original building.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description, taken from Assessor's Office, City-County Building, Indianapolis: Indianapolis Insurance Company Subdivision - Lot 8 Block 64 to Lot 13 Block 64; Smith's Subdivision part of Lot 1 Block 64; part of Lot 3 Block 64.

This property was sold on 2 June 1967 to Jefferson National Life Insurance Company, who is the present owner of it.

The 1912 addition to the building was built on the south 20 feet of Smith's Subdivision Lot 8 (this had frontage on South Pennsylvania Street) and on the northern part of Lot 3 Block 64 with a 5-inch strip of Smith Subdivision Lot 1 (this had a frontage of 55'-6" on Virginia Avenue). The piece with the 20-foot frontage was purchased from C. M. Mallott and the one with the 55'-6" frontage from Union Trust Company. This information is given on a drawing of the site by the architect.

4. Builder or contractors, suppliers:

For the original building:

Koss and Fritz, stonemasons

Wm. P. Jungclaus, general contractor

Brown-Ketcham Co., iron works

G. Ittenbach & Co., cut stone work

H. R. Saunders, sculptor

John Martin, brick mason

Pickell Marble Co., marble work

Joseph Ernst, plasterer

Julius Keller, cement work

Baker and Smith, steam heating

Freaney Brothers, plumbing

Mosler Safe Co., burglar proof vaults

H. W. Lant, copper work

For the 1950 addition:

W. P. Jungclaus was the general contractor.

5. Original plan and construction: After a fire on 18 Sept. 1895 that destroyed the bank's quarters, the directors commissioned D. A. Bohlen and Son, Architects, to design a new building. Oscar D. Bohlen of the architectural firm and bank president Volney T. Mallott went to New York City to look at banks. Construction began 1 Feb. 1896. The building was occupied on 12 Jan. 1897. The building was designed in the Classic style and was fire-proof. The exterior was of Indiana oolitic limestone, carved by H. R. Saunders, sculptor. The interior was finished in white Italian marble. The dimensions were given as 128 feet long, 63 feet wide, and 36 feet high.

It is interesting to note that The American Architect and Building News carried drawings by Marsh, Israels and Harder, architects, titled "Competitive (Unsuccessful) Design...", dated 1895. This plan centers on a circular, domed rotunda, quite different from the rectangular banking chamber of Bohlen's design. A competition, then, preceded the award of the commission to D. A. Bohlen and Sons.

The vaults are described as "built of laminated chrome steel overlapping plates - no cast steel or chilled steel entering into their construction". Inspection of the working drawings showed that the vault floor and footing included railroad rails laid in two directions with the rails placed side by side. The present owner of the property is understood to have left the vault--it was not demolished with the rest of the building.

The main banking room was spanned by steel trusses and the floor of this space had shallow segmental arches of masonry spanning between steel beams. From the beginning the building was heated by steam piped under the streets to downtown buildings from a central steel plant. In the original building the first floor housed the tellers' cages and small desks. The vault was in the basement, as were the transit and bookkeeping departments, whose desks were boards on sawhorses. The stairway to the basement was in the back center of the lobby, and the safe deposit vault was at the front right side as one entered the front door, where the teller cages began. This building functioned quite differently from a present-day bank. It was a commercial bank where businesses could deposit extra cash without interest. The bank made commercial loans and maintained checking accounts for businesses and wealthy individuals. There were no checking accounts for the average persons, no savings accounts as known today, and no mortgage or installment loans.

6. Alterations and additions: Expansion of the building had been planned for, and in 1912 a two-story addition was made consisting of two bays on the west elevation of the building along South Pennsylvania Street and six bays on the northeast elevation along Virginia Avenue.

At this time prison lights were installed in the sidewalk along South Pennsylvania Street to give natural lighting for the cellar.

Photographs dating from 1902 or slightly earlier of the bank and neighboring buildings on South Pennsylvania Street show proceeding in order southward from the original bank building--a narrow two-story building, the Scottish Rite Building of about seven stories, and the Majestic Building of ten stories at the corner of South Pennsylvania and East Maryland Streets. The 1912 addition replaced the two-story building on South Pennsylvania Street and replaced other existing buildings along Virginia Avenue. The north elevation of the bank is also shown.

In 1935 the Scottish Rite Building was purchased and demolished and another two-story addition to the bank was made to the south. At this time the upstairs floor was rearranged, opening it up. The freestanding octagonal tables in the main banking room were installed then, as were new bronze entrance doors at the north entrance, and the vault at the rear of the first floor

was removed in order to allow connection to the large addition to the south. 17.

In 1950 six stories (and a penthouse?) were added on top of the 1935 addition with a facade of Indiana limestone. Air conditioning and high-speed elevators were included. In plan it had 82 feet of frontage on South Pennsylvania Street and was 101 feet deep. The additional space was to be used as additional meeting rooms and for expansion of then-existing departments. A photograph published 17 June 1950 shows the steel structure as its highest point was reached. A photograph of the completed addition was published by the general contractor in a brochure of his work.

In 1958 a nine-story office building 40 feet wide fronting on East Maryland Street and 120 feet deep was built. In plan it lapped over the rear of the 1935 and 1950 additions and was accessible through them at all floor levels. The 1958 addition had a facade consisting of an aluminum-and-glass curtain wall outlined by Indiana limestone trim. The building was air conditioned. The 1935, 1950 and 1958 additions are standing today. The 1958 addition replaced the 68-year-old Ober Building on its site.

In 1970 the original portions of the bank building and the 1912 addition were razed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Building:

- 1834 The Indianapolis Branch of the State Bank of Indiana was established.
- 1857 The Indianapolis Branch of the Bank of the State of Indiana, successor to the State Bank of Indiana, was established, financed by private capital.
- 1865 The Indiana National Bank was organized, chartered to succeed the Indianapolis Branch.
- 1893 The Union Trust Company of Indianapolis was formed and immediately became an affiliate of the Indiana National Bank.
- 1912 The Capital National Bank and the Indiana National Bank merged.
- 1930 The assets of the Continental National Bank were purchased.

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- 1947 First branch bank was opened at East 38th and Washington Boulevard.
- 1950 Union Trust Company merged with Indiana National Bank.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Conversation with Melvin Meyer of Bohlen, Meyer, Gibson and Associates, 14 June 1971.

May 12, 1896. Copy of Manuscript read at the laying of the cornerstone. In files of Indiana National Bank, 1 Indiana Square, Indianapolis.

Presentation drawings, working drawings, and shop drawings for the original building and subsequent additions and alterations are on file at the office of Bohlen, Meyer, Gibson and Associates, Inc., Architects, 3000 Meadows Parkway, Indianapolis, Indiana.

2. Secondary and published sources:

American Architect and Building News, 8 Aug., 1896, No. 1076.

American Banker, 19 Feb. 1958. (Newspaper clipping.)

Architecture and Design, Vol. XIX, Mar. 1955.

"Bank Elections", Indianapolis News, 12 Jan. 1897.

Hyman, Max R., Journal Handbook of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, 1902.

"The Indiana National Bank of Indianapolis, 1834-1960", Bank Notes, Nov. 1960.

Indianapolis News, 22 Dec. 1949. (Newspaper clipping.)

Indianapolis Star, 17 June 1950.

Teller, house organ of Indiana National Corp., Christmas

issue, 1969. In files of Indiana National Bank,  
1 Indiana Square, Indianapolis.

Prepared by Wesley I. Shank  
Architectural Historian  
Iowa State University  
August 1971

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Indiana National Bank Building is an excellent example of Renaissance, Baroque and Classical Revival elements organized into a well-sealed composition. The detailing and use of materials on the exterior and interior is exceptional. The main banking room was equal to any in Indianapolis and certainly it would have to be considered one of the finest in the state. Due to the truncated site and the size of the building, it has a unique scale.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent, although the Bank has vacated the structure and it will probably be demolished in the near future.

### B. Detailed Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: (NE) 150'-0" x 100'-0" x (W) 155'-0"
2. Number of bays: Three at facade.
3. Number of stories: One with a balcony and a basement.
4. Layout, shape: Triangle
5. Foundations: Concrete
6. Wall construction, finish and color: Indiana limestone rusticated to about 8'-0". Pilasters of limestone set on high bases carry a continuous stone entablature. The windows are expressed in two tiers and are defined by the pilasters thus giving the impression of a two-story structure. The system is quite similar to Italian Manneristic solutions, particularly the Palazzo Conservatori on the Capitaline, Rome, by Michelangelo.

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7. Structural system framing: In the areas of the vaults, it is concrete. It would appear that the first floor is carried in part on hollow tile and concrete. A metal truss system is present above the decorative skylight.
  8. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: None
  9. Chimneys: None
  10. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance doors at the north facade are bronze with NID set in a round, simple shield on a union jack design and framed by a running fret. A three panel door has the bottom one essentially a kick plate, a long center panel with a union jack panel. Brass jambs, brass entablature and brass lunette transom have union jack muttons and glazed wedges.
    - b. Windows: The top sash of the wooden double hung windows have a semi-circular headed light. The windows are largely concealed at the first floor by a series of closely spaced square iron bars. The first floor windows are defined by stone arches while those at the second story are defined by triangular pediments of limestone.
  11. Roof:
    - a. Shape, covering: Built-up roof.
    - b. Cornice, eaves: Limestone entablature surmounted by a limestone balustrade.
    - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None
- C. Detailed Description of the Interior:
1. Floor plans:
    - a. Basement: Public space at the north end of the building is triangular in form, defined on the right (west) by iron bars and on the left (NE diagonal wall) by safety deposit box rooms (8). There is a large vault on north-south axis with doors on the north and south. Lesser vaults, counting rooms and mechanical equipment spaces are to the east, south and west of the main vault.



- b. First floor: A triangular plan, major banking space is entered from north (facade) with a large banking space rectangular in form and two stories in height. Teller cages are freestanding on the right (west) and piers on the left (east). Elevators at south end of space give access to offices located in a new tower at the rear. The elevators were added when the office block was added in the 1920's. Private offices and service elements are behind the teller cages on the left (east).
- c. Balcony: There is a narrow 3'-6" balcony along right (west) wall and along part of left (northeast) wall. This becomes an enclosed space above teller cages on the left and extending along diagonal left (northeast) wall, and an ascent to elevators at south end of the structure. An L-shaped space around the main banking areas was used as general office area for small offices along the northeast wall.

2. Stairways:

- a. Basement: The major stairway to the main banking room on the first floor is located near the main entrance along the west wall. It has marble walls, risers and treads with double brass railing on simple brass posts in the center, and brass railings secured to the walls with brass brackets. It is an open stairway with two runs and 25 risers.
- b. First floor: Located in office areas behind the teller cages are modest, single run open stairways with cork on steel treads, steel risers, and open railings of metal work.

3. Flooring:

- a. Basement: Grey terrazzo in public spaces. Vaults have hexagonal tile flooring white in color. Concrete in mechanical equipment spaces.
- b. First floor: Terrazzo simple grid pattern established by brass strips contrasting dark grey border and strips about 2'-0" from east to west in main banking space with lighter grey panels about 7'-0" x 34'-0". Cork tile in some offices and behind teller cages.
- c. Balcony: Terrazzo, dark grey in color, and tan carpet covers the L-shaped space and offices.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

- a. Basement: Plaster walls and ceiling walls are painted pale blue in public space and the ceilings are white. Some steel walls are at money receiving and counting rooms.
- b. First floor: Plaster walls (tan) and ceiling (off white) are in banking space. Acoustical ceiling tile is used elsewhere. The main banking space and east wall of banking space have marble pilasters (grey) along exterior walls. Pilasters have plaster caps. The column caps are defined by an entablature of plaster, with volutes of plaster defining plaster beams which form a grid in the main banking space. A marble wainscot in grey marble or white with black veining is in main banking space. Windows are flanked by marble pilasters (doric caps) set on marble wainscot.
- c. Balcony: Plaster walls are painted tan, marble wainscot with small pilasters set on it flank windows at balcony level adjacent to main banking space. L-shaped space and offices have plaster walls, tan in color, and acoustical tile ceiling suspended below original ceiling.

5. Doorways and doors:

- a. Basement: Vault doors at main vault are circular about 7'-6" diameter, Yale Patented Hollers winding system, December 3, 1901. Smaller vault doors are less complex of metal. Public doors are wooden, solid core units.
- b. First floor: Hollow metal door frames with metal clad or solid core doors. Most are 3'-0" x 7'-0".
- c. Second floor: Wooden flush solid core doors are set in hollow metal or more recently installed aluminum frames.

6. Special decorative features, trim and cabinet work: Skylight in main banking space is about 30'-0" in diameter, radial pattern of urns and other geometric elements. Background is amber, geometric elements in blue-grey. The teller cages have finely detailed solid bronze cages set on a variegated white with black marble slab at counter height. Cages are continuous on west side, simple geometric bars, squares, and squares

within squares reinforced by diagonals. Stanchions have bases, pilasters with scrolls, and brass entablature.

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7. Notable hardware: Around vault doors (basement) and teller cages.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Modern system
  - b. Lighting: Modern electrical system. Bronze standards on balcony rail posts are original although the globes appear to have been added in the 1920's. Brass standards in the form of torches with modern globes and a ring bulk mounted on piers in main banking room.
  - c. Plumbing system: Modern electrical system

C. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting: The main entrance is at the (north) clipped point of the truncated site. The west elevation is parallel to Pennsylvania Street, a major north-south street. The northeast elevation is parallel to Virginia Street, a diagonal street (about 45 ) that runs northwest to southeast. The south elevation is defined by a multi-story office building.

Prepared by David R. Hermansen  
Ball State University  
October 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperative project in 1970 between the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Historic American Buildings Survey. During this project, nine buildings in Indianapolis were measured and drawn, and sixteen more were recorded with professional photographs and written data.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects under the direction of Professor David R. Hermansen of Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. Professor

Wesley Shank of Iowa State University prepared the historical data, and Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, provided the photographic record. H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA, State Preservation Coordinator, President of the Historic Landmarks Foundation, and member of the HABS Advisory Board, served as consultant throughout the project.